

TITLE

**IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS HAVING STRUCTURE FOR
PREVENTING NOISE AND VIBRATION OF DEVELOPING DEVICE**

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

[0001] This application makes reference to, incorporates the same herein, and claims all benefits accruing under 35 U.S.C. §119 from my application *IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS HAVING STRUCTURE FOR PREVENTING NOISE AND VIBRATION OF DEVELOPING DEVICE* filed with the Korean Industrial Property Office on 9 May 2001 and there duly assigned Serial No. 25078/2001.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Technical Field

[0002] The present invention relates to an electrophotographic image forming apparatus, such as a laser printer or a photo-copying machine. More particularly, the invention relates to a structure of an electrophotographic image forming apparatus capable of preventing noise and vibration generated from a developing device during the printing process.

Related Art

[0003] A laser printer, which is an image forming apparatus, uses an electrophotographic method to form an electrostatic latent image by projecting a laser beam onto a charged

1 photosensitive medium, develops the electrostatic latent image as a visible image by use of toner
2 particles, and transfers and settles the electrostatic latent image on a printing paper.

3 **[0004]** The laser printer comprises a paper-distributing unit for transferring paper from a stack
4 of paper disposed in a tray to a paper-transferring path, a developing device which forms a toner
5 image based on a printing signal on a photosensitive drum by means of an electrophotographic
6 process, and which transfer the toner image from the paper distributing unit to the transferred
7 paper, and a settling unit for settling the toner image transferred to the paper.

8 **[0005]** In prior developing devices, when the amount of toner supplied to the photosensitive
9 drum from the supplying roller through the developing roller is small (in other words, when an
10 image having little data is printed, or when the toner in the toner accommodating chamber is
11 almost used), the toner insufficiently covers the surfaces of the supplying roller, the developing
12 roller, the charging roller, the transferring roller and the photosensitive drum. Accordingly, the
13 surface of each roller and of the photosensitive drum directly contact each other. Therefore,
14 abrasion of the rollers, as well as noise and vibration, can occur due to friction between the
15 rollers and the photosensitive drum which, in turn, is due to their rotating in direct contact with
16 each other. In addition, a resonance is generated since a frequency, which is generated by the
17 noise and the vibration caused by the friction between the rollers and the photosensitive drum, is
18 overlapped with a natural frequency of the developing roller and the photosensitive drum. The
19 noise becomes exacerbated due to the resonance, and the printing of the image cannot be
20 performed well because of the vibration of the entire image forming apparatus.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention has been developed to overcome the above-mentioned problems of the related art.

[0007] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an image forming apparatus having a structure which prevents noise and vibration from being generated in a developing device, even when the rollers and the photosensitive drum are rotated in direct surface contact with each other due to an insufficient amount of toner.

[0008] The above object is accomplished by providing an image forming apparatus which includes the photosensitive drum, a pivot disposed at the center of the photosensitive drum for rotatably supporting the photosensitive drum, and a mass body disposed on the pivot of the photosensitive drum for changing a frequency of the pivot by changing the center of gravity and the shape of the pivot.

[0009] According to the present invention, noise and vibration of the developing device, generated due to friction between rollers and the photosensitive drum, is absorbed by the mass body. Moreover, since the frequency of the pivot is changed, exacerbation of the noise and the vibration can be prevented by a resonance among the noise, the vibration frequency, and the natural frequency of the pivot.

[0010] The mass body is disposed at the pivot and at a predetermined distance from an inner circumference of the photosensitive drum. The main body has a form capable of adding a distributed load longitudinally along the pivot, and is positioned toward the area at which noise and vibration of the photosensitive drum are generated.

1 [0011] Preferably, the mass body is made of rubber material, so that the effect of absorbing
2 noise and vibration is increased.

3 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

4 [0012] A more complete appreciation of the invention, and many of the attendant advantages
5 thereof, will be readily apparent as the same becomes better understood by reference to the
6 following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings,
7 in which like reference numerals indicate the same or similar components, and wherein:

8 [0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective view schematically showing a photosensitive drum of an image
9 forming apparatus;

10 [0014] FIG. 2 is a side sectional view showing a developing device of an image forming
11 apparatus according to the present invention; and

12 [0015] FIG. 3 is a perspective view schematically showing the photosensitive drum in the
13 developing device.

14 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

15 [0016] The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to
16 the accompanying drawings, in which preferred embodiments of the invention are shown.

17 [0017] FIG. 1 is a perspective view schematically showing a photosensitive drum of an image
18 forming apparatus. Referring to FIG. 1, the photosensitive drum 1 is a cylinder having a cavity
19 in it, and a pivot 2 is inserted through the center of the photosensitive drum 1 for rotatably

1 supporting the photosensitive drum 1. The pivot 2 is preferably a round bar type, and is made of
2 a conductive material for the purpose of grounding the photosensitive drum 1.

3 **[0018]** FIG. 2 is a side sectional view showing a developing device of an image forming
4 apparatus according to the present invention. Referring to FIG. 2, a developing device 20 of an
5 image forming apparatus according to the present invention comprises: a developing body 21
6 having a toner accommodating chamber 21a and a developing chamber 21b; a photosensitive
7 drum 23 having a photosensitive layer formed of photo-conductive material spread around the
8 outer circumference of the photosensitive drum 1; a charging roller 27, an exposing unit 28, a
9 developing roller 24, and a transferring roller 29 disposed along the outer circumference of the
10 photosensitive drum 23; and a supplying roller 26 for supplying toner stored in the toner
11 accommodating chamber 21a by contact with the outer circumference of the developing roller
12 24. The charging roller 27 contacts a photosensitive surface of the photosensitive drum 23 while
13 being connected to a bias voltage for charging, and charges the photosensitive surface of the
14 photosensitive drum 23 with a predetermined polarity and an electric potential as a result of
15 being passively driven by the rotation of the photosensitive drum 23. The exposing unit 28 forms
16 the electrostatic latent image by projecting a laser beam onto the photosensitive surface of the
17 photosensitive drum 23 charged by the charging roller 27. The developing roller 24 visualizes the
18 electrostatic latent image formed on the photosensitive drum 23 with the toner supplied by the
19 supplying roller 26. The transferring roller 29 transfers the toner image to the printing paper P as
20 a result of being supplied with a transferring potential of a polarity opposite to that of the
21 charging electric potential of the toner.

1 [0019] As also seen in Figure 2, a toner cartridge 10 adds toner to the toner accommodating
2 chamber 21a. The toner accommodating chamber 21a and the developing chamber 21b are
3 divided by a partition 25, and an opening 25a is formed in the partition 25 for supplying the toner
4 in the toner accommodating chamber 21a to the supplying roller 26. The toner supplied from the
5 toner cartridge 10 to the toner accommodating chamber 21a is blended by an agitator 30, and is
6 discharged to the developing chamber 21b through the opening 25a. The toner drawn into the
7 developing chamber 21b is supplied to the developing roller 24 by the supplying roller 26. The
8 toner supplied to the developing roller 24 contacts the surface of the photosensitive drum 23 after
9 being charged with a predetermined polarity at the developing roller 24. The latter
10 predetermined polarity is the same as the polarity of the charging potential of the photosensitive
11 drum 23. A predetermined developing bias from a power source (not shown) is applied to the
12 developing roller 24, and consequently, when the toner on the developing roller 24 contacts the
13 photosensitive drum 23, the toner adheres to the exposed part (the discharged part) but not to the
14 unexposed part (the charged part) of the photosensitive drum 23 due to electrostatic interaction
15 between the electric charge of the toner, the electrostatic latent image, and the developing bias.
16 Therefore, a toner image corresponding to the electrostatic latent image is formed on the
17 photosensitive drum 23.

18 [0020] FIG. 3 is a perspective view schematically showing the photosensitive drum in the
19 developing device. Referring to FIG. 3, the photosensitive drum 23 is a cylinder having a cavity
20 in it, and a pivot 22 is inserted through the center of the photosensitive drum 23 for rotatably
21 supporting the photosensitive drum 23. The pivot 22 is made of conductive material for

grounding the photosensitive drum 23.

[0021] The toner lubricates the area between the supplying roller 26 (FIG. 2) and the developing roller 24, and also the respective contacting surfaces between the developing roller 24, the charging roller 27 and the transferring roller 29, on one side, and the photosensitive drum 23, on another side. When the amount of toner supplied from the supplying roller 26 to the photosensitive drum 23 through the developing roller 24 is insufficient, the respective surfaces of the rollers 24, 27 and 29 and the surface of the photosensitive drum 23 contact each other directly since the respective surfaces of rollers 24, 27 and 29 and the surface of the photosensitive drum 23 are incompletely covered by the toner. Accordingly, not only do noise and vibration occur, but also abrasion of the rollers 24, 27 and 29 occurs due to friction between the rollers 24, 27 and 29 and the photosensitive drum 23 as a result of their rotation in direct contact with each other. Moreover, resonance occurs because a frequency generated by the noise and the vibration due to friction between the photosensitive drum 23 and the rollers 24, 27 and 29 overlaps with the natural frequency of the developing roller 24 and the photosensitive drum 23. To prevent the resonance from occurring, the frequency that generates the noise should be changed.

[0022] Generally, the frequency is calculated by the following mathematical expression:

$$f^2 = \alpha \frac{k}{m}$$

where 'f' is frequency, 'a' is a constant, 'm' is mass, and 'k' is a shape factor. As can be seen in the above expression, the shape factor 'k' and the mass 'm' should be changed in order to change

1 the frequency band at which the noise and vibration occur. However, if the shape or the mass of
2 the photosensitive drum 23 or of the developing roller 24 is changed, then the entire shape or the
3 mass of the image forming apparatus is changed, and thus, the image cannot be well formed.
4 Accordingly, it is preferable that the shape and the mass of the pivot 22, inserted through the
5 photosensitive drum 23, be changed.

6 **[0023]** Therefore, according to the present invention, as shown in FIG. 3, by forming a mass
7 body 22a on the pivot 22 in the photosensitive drum 23, the shape of the pivot 22 is changed and
8 the mass of pivot 22 is increased, and thus the frequency of the pivot 22 is changed. The mass
9 body 22a absorbs the noise and the vibration caused by the friction between the rollers 24, 27 and
10 29 and the photosensitive drum 23, and especially the friction between the developing roller 24
11 and the photosensitive drum 23. In addition, since the frequency of the pivot 22 is changed by the
12 mass body 22a, it can prevent exacerbation of the noise and the vibration caused by the
13 resonance generated as a result of the overlapping of the frequency due to the noise and the
14 vibration and the frequency of the pivot 22.

15 **[0024]** The mass body 22a can be formed either integrally with the pivot 22 or separately. It is
16 preferable that the mass body 22a have the shape of a cylinder for adding loads of even
17 distribution to the longitudinal extent of the pivot 22. The mass body 22a can be formed so that
18 the center of gravity is toward the portion experiencing friction between rollers 24, 27 and 29
19 and the photosensitive drum 23 at which the noise and vibration occur. It is preferable that the
20 mass body 22a be disposed on the pivot 22 at a predetermined distance from the inner
21 circumference of the photosensitive drum 23 since the noise and the vibration absorbed by the

1 mass body 22a can be amplified if the mass body 22a and the photosensitive drum 23 contact
2 each other.

3 **[0025]** The mass body 22a can be made of conductive material as is the pivot 22, but if the
4 mass body 22a is made of rubber material, the efficiency of absorbing noise and vibration is
5 increased.

6 **[0026]** As described above, according to the present invention, by forming the mass body 22a
7 on the pivot 22 so as to add mass to the pivot 22 in the photosensitive drum 23, the noise and the
8 vibration of the developing device 20, caused by friction between the photosensitive drum 23 and
9 the rollers 24, 27 and 29, is absorbed at the mass body 22a. Moreover, since the frequency of the
10 pivot 22 is changed, exacerbation of the noise and the vibration due to a resonance among the
11 noise, vibration frequency, and the natural frequency of the pivot 22 can be prevented.

12 **[0027]** Although preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described, it will
13 be understood by those skilled in the art that the present invention should not be limited to the
14 described preferred embodiments, but various changes and modifications can be made within the
15 spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention is not
16 limited within the described range, and is limited only by the following claims.